

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 00473 01 OF 03 111147Z

16

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7198

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN PRIORITY

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN PRIORITY

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 00473

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, SOPN, GW

SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE
MILITARY SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL FROM U.S. STOCKPILES IN
THE FRG

REF: BONN 0303

BEGIN SUMMARY: GERMAN NEWS MEDIA CONTINUE TO DISCUSS
THE SUBJECT OF WHAT THE FRG'S POSITION WOULD BE IF THE
U.S. ONCE AGAIN ATTEMPTED TO RESUPPLY ISRAEL FROM U.S.
STOCKPILES IN GERMANY DURING A RENEWED OUTBREAK OF ARAB-
ISRAELI FIGHTING. AS IN THE MEDIA TREATMENT REPORTED IN
REFTEL, THERE SEEMS TO BE AN ASSUMPTION THAT THE FRG
WOULD NOT OPPOSE THE U.S. SENDING SUPPLIES TO
ISRAEL FROM ITS STOCKPILES IN THE FRG
. ONCE AGAIN, HOWEVER, THE PRESS CLEARLY HOPES
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PAGE 02 BONN 00473 01 OF 03 111147Z

EITHER THAT THE U.S. HAS MADE CONTINGENCY PLANNING WHICH

WILL NOT REQUIRE DRAWDOWNS ON ITS STOCKPILES IN GERMANY
OR THAT SUCH DRAWDOWNS CAN BE DONE DISCREETLY ENOUGH NOT
TO PRODUCE ARAB RETALIATION AGAINST THE FRG. END
SUMMARY.

1. HERBERT VON BORCH, WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT OF THE
SUDDEU TSCHE ZEITUNG, ON JANUARY 10 REFERRED TO THE TEN-
SION WHICH HAD ARISEN BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND BONN IN
OCTOBER OF 1973 WHEN U.S. MILITARY SUPPLIES WERE SHIPPED
FROM THE FRG TO ISRAEL ON ISRAELI FREIGHTERS. HE COM-
MENTED AS FOLLOWS: "WHEN FEDERAL CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT
VISITED WASHINGTON IN DECEMBER, HE DENIED THAT THERE HAD
BEEN ANY TALKS ON HOW TO REACT IN CASE OF THE REPETITION
OF SUCH A SITUATION IN A NEW WAR. THE AMERICANS ARE
TAKING THE SAME ATTITUDE. BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE
IS GERMAN-AMERICAN AGREEMENT THAT IN FUTURE AMERICAN NOT
ISRAELI SHIPS ARE TO BE USED TO TRANSPORT ARMS. THE
GERMAN SIDE COULD DISCLAIM ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS
AND THUS WOULD BE ABLE FORMALLY TO MAINTAIN ITS POLICY
OF NEUTRALITY. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE AUTHORITIES, HOW-
EVER, WASHINGTON IN GENERAL SEES THE CURRENT SITUATION
IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT THAN IN OCTOBER 1973. IN SPITE OF
THE SLOWNESS TO ACHIEVE UNITED RESPONSES BY CONSUMER
COUNTRIES, NEW DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED SINCE THE
ENERGY CONFERENCE IN FEBRUARY 1974. THEY MAKE REPORTED
GERMAN NERVOUSNESS, WHICH SCHMIDT TRIED TO MUTE IN HIS
SPIEGEL INTERVIEW, APPEAR TO BE LESS JUSTIFIABLE. THE
HYPOTHESIS THAT THE FRG WOULD BE CONFRONTED BY THE
DILEMMA EITHER TO PERMIT ARMS SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL (AND
THEREBY COURT AN ECONOMICALLY DANGEROUS ARAB OIL EMBARGO)
OR TO OPPOSE THE DELIVERY OF SUPPLIES EVEN ON U.S.
SHIPS (AND THEREBY JEOPARDIZE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH
AMERICA) IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE RESULT OF POSING THE
WRONG QUESTIONS."

2. FRIEDRICH THELEN, FOREIGN EDITOR OF THE PRO-CDU
DEUTSCHE ZEITUNG, LIKEWISE DISCUSSED US-FRG ATTEMPTS TO
AVOID A RENEWAL OF THEIR OCTOBER 1973 ARMS DELIVERY
PROBLEM. HE COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS ON JANUARY 9: "IN
SPITE OF ALL DENIALS, THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN DEALT WITH
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PAGE 03 BONN 00473 01 OF 03 111147Z

BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND BONN. IT OCCURRED NOT ONLY ON
THE OCCASION OF THE SCHLESINGER VISIT IN BONN BUT ALSO
IN TALKS BETWEEN PRESIDENT FORD AND THE FEDERAL CHANCEL-
LOR DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT TO THE U.S. IN DECEMBER.

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PAGE 01 BONN 00473 02 OF 03 111148Z

15

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 00473

IN HIS STATEMENT BEFORE THE BUNDESTAG, HELMUT SCHMIDT STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF OPINION ON QUESTIONS OF SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY AND IN PARTICULAR DETAIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE NEAR EAST." HIS NEXT SENTENCE STATES THAT: "FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER WILL INFORM THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CONCERNING DETAILS- ALTHOUGH PUBLICLY WE KEEP SILENT, THIS CAN ONLY MEAN THAT IN CASE OF CONFLICT COORDINATION WOULD BE UNAVOIDABLE BETWEEN THE USA AND THE 'STRONGEST EUROPEAN' PARTNER PARTICULARLY CLOSELY ATTACHED TO THE USA (THE FRG). ALTHOUGH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IN A RECENT SPIEGEL INTERVIEW DENIED HAVING BEEN SUBJECT TO AMERICAN PRESSURE IN THAT REGARD AND DENIED BEING PREPARED TO YIELD, HE IS AWARE THAT SPECIAL PRESSURE IS NOT REQUIRED. BEYOND ALL FORMAL AGREEMENTS, THERE IS A TIE

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PAGE 02 BONN 00473 02 OF 03 111148Z

BETWEEN THE USA AND THE FRG WHICH IS ULTIMATELY THE
RAISON D'ETRE OF OUR SECURITY AND FREEDOM. THE FRG
CANNOT FAIL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SUCH AN EXPENSIVE
INSTRUMENT AS THE AMERICAN MILITARY UNITS ON THIS SIDE
OF THE ATLANTIC ARE HERE NOT ONLY TO PROTECT EUROPE BUT
ALSO TO FUNCTION AS A STRATEGIC RESERVE FOR THE WORLD
POWER WHICH IS THE USA."

3. THEO SOMMER, EDITOR OF DIE ZEIT AND FORMERLY FMOD
PLANNING CHIEF UNDER SCHMIDT, DISCUSSED THE DER SPIEGEL
INTERVIEW IN THE JANUARY 9 ISSUE. HE NOTED "...
HELMUT SCHMIDT HAS NOT DENIED THE AMERICANS ANYTHING.
HE HAS ONLY STATED THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW OF ANY AMERICAN
PRESSURE AND THAT HE WOULD NOT GIVE IN TO ANY SUCH
PRESSURE. HE LEFT OPEN THE QUESTION OF WHETHER HE WOULD
ONLY REFUSE TO GIVE IN TO PRESSURE BUT NOT TO GENTLY
TENDERED REQUESTS TO USE GERMAN TERRITORY FOR AMERICAN
MIDDLE EAST OPERATIONS. FURTHERMORE, HE REFUSED PUBLIC-
LY TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER: 'THAT WOULD BE VERY DANGER-
OUS' THE MINI-STORM ... COMPLETELY OVERLOOKED THE
ACTUAL QUESTION WHICH SCHMIDT AS WELL AS KISSINGER HAD
RAISED IN THEIR INTERVIEW AND REMARKS: I.E., THE
QUESTION AS TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE US AND
WESTERN EUROPE. SCHMIDT DELIBERATELY DESISTED FROM
SPELLING OUT AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. ON THE ONE
HAND, IT IS A QUESTION ADDRESSED TO OURSELVES. WHEN DO
WE, WHO IN THE EAST-WEST ORDER OF BATTLE STAND BY THE
SIDE OF THE AMERICANS (AND HAVE TO STAND THERE), HAVE
OUR OWN NATIONAL INTEREST IN SEEING THAT THE REGIONAL
BALANCE IN THE NEAR EAST DOES NOT CHANGE IN FAVOR OF THE
SOVIETS? IN CASE OF NEED, DO WE PERMIT THE USE OF OUR
TERRITORY IN ORDER TO SECURE OR RESTORE THE BALANCE?
ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS A QUESTION ADDRESSED TO THE
AMERICANS: HOW FAR IN THE EVENT OF A NEW CONFLICT WILL
THEY CONSIDER EUROPE'S ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND THERE-
FORE NOT EXPOSE US TO ARAB REPRISALS BECAUSE OF ARBI-
TRARY US MILITARY ACTIVITIES ON OUR TERRITORY?"

4. THE RHEINISCHE POST OF JANUARY 9 REFERRED TO THE
SAME DILEMMA. "THE OUTBREAK OF A NEW NEAR EAST WAR
WOULD LAND THE FRG IN A DOUBLY DANGEROUS POSITION: ON
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PAGE 03 BONN 00473 02 OF 03 111148Z

THE ONE HAND, IT TOGETHER WITH OTHER WESTERN STATES
WOULD BE THREATENED BY AN ARAB OIL BOYCOTT. ON THE
OTHER HAND, IT WOULD BE SEESAWED BETWEEN ARAB CAPITALS

AND WASHINGTON BECAUSE THE US WOULD SEND ARMS SUPPLIES
TO ISRAEL FROM WEST GERMAN SUPPLY BASES. THE FRG HAS
TRIED TO AVOID REMAINING IN THIS DANGEROUS POSITION."
THE RHEINISCHE POST GOES ON TO NOTE THAT "AT THE TURN

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PAGE 01 BONN 00473 03 OF 03 111148Z

15
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UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 00473

OF THE YEAR 1974/75, THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO BONN IN
AN INTERVIEW WITH A LEBANESE NEWSPAPER POINTED OUT THAT
RENEWED DELIVERIES OF SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL FROM GERMAN
TERRITORY 'WOULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FRG ITSELF.'
PRIOR TO THAT, HOWEVER, FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER
(SPD) AND HIS AMERICAN COLLEAGUE SCHLESINGER HAD AGREED
TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION IN CASE OF A NEW NEAR-EAST WAR.
THIS HAPPENED IN CONFIDENTIAL CONTACTS, AND THE FRG
GOVERNMENT FOR WELL-CONSIDERED REASONS AVOIDS ANY PUBLIC

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THIS SUBJECT." AFTER DISCUSSING THE
DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED SCHLESINGER-LEBER AGREEMENT IN
TERMS SIMILAR TO THAT EMPLOYED BY THE BONNER RUNDSCHAU
(REFTTEL), THE RHEINISCHE POST CONTINUES: "IT RE-
MAINS AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER IN CASE OF A NEW NEAR
EAST CONFLICT WASHINGTON WILL IN FACT FORWARD MILITARY
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PAGE 02 BONN 00473 03 OF 03 111148Z

AID TO ISRAEL FROM ITS GERMAN BASES. U.S. SUPPLY DEPOTS
ARE ALSO LOCATED IN GREAT BRITAIN. WITHOUT POLITICALLY
BURDENING ITS NATO ALLIES, WASHINGTON COULD ALSO ORGAN-
IZE DIRECT SUPPORT FLIGHTS FROM THE U.S. TO ISRAEL.
THIS COULD BE DONE BY HAVING ITS AIR TRANSPORTS FLY
WITHOUT STOPOVERS BUT WITH ONLY HALF THEIR PAYLOADS OR
BY REFUELLING THEM WHILE IN FLIGHT. SUCH PROCEDURES,
HOWEVER, ARE VERY EXPENSIVE. IN ADDITION, A STOPOVER IN
THE AZORES, WHICH IS A U.S. BASE, WOULD BE POSSIBLE."

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